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Date: 11/10/2016

GAIN Report Number: HU16004

Hungary

Post: Budapest

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Outbreak in Hungary

Report Categories:

Export Accomplishments - Market Access

Approved By:

Kelly Stange

Prepared By:

Dr. Gellert Golya

Report Highlights:

Hungary has reported a highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza outbreak at a turkey farm in Totkomlos, Hungary on November 4, 2016. The animal health authorities immediately placed the affected holding under restrictions, and protection and surveillance zones have been established around the infected area.

General Information:

The State Secretariat for Food Chain Control of the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture confirmed a highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza outbreak at a turkey farm in Totkomlos, Bekes County (Southeast Hungary).

The affected holding kept five flocks of altogether 10200 fattening turkeys in closed technology. As increasing mortality was observed, samples were taken to the National Reference Laboratory on October 31, which raised attention to the possible HPAI infection on the same day. The local animal health authority immediately performed an epidemiological check and restrictive measures were ordered based on the suspicion of infection. The results of laboratory examination confirmed the presence of the HPAI subtype H5N8 in the samples. The destruction of flocks had been started on November 2 and was finished on November 3. In compliance with the EU and national legislation, a protection zone with a radius of 3 km and a 10 km radius surveillance zone have been established around the infected holding. Investigation into the origin of the infection is ongoing, however the proximity of wetlands and migratory birds observed close to the holding suggest that wild birds could be a possible source of infection.

Despite the fact that the Government of Hungary and the related product councils and associations have done a lot for a sustainable growth in production and exports of turkeys since the earlier case was found in Hungary in February 2015, the new HPAI outbreak will cause difficulties for the sector. The infected Bekes County is one of the biggest turkey producing regions in Hungary with significant processing capacity and now it is excluded from international trade. In addition, several non-EU countries (e.g. Japan, Israel, and the South African Republic) introduced a temporary import ban on turkeys from all parts of Hungary based on their risk assessment and after the related notification of outbreak to the [World Organization for Animal Health](#) (OIE). However, the zoning principle of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (article 10.4) would make exports possible from other counties of Hungary. The HPAI outbreak could also affect Hungary's export trade with China, which was the top non-EU trading partner of the country in 2015. Hungarian food exports to China have increased due to bilateral talks on trade. In June, 2016, Hungary signed food export agreements with China in Ningbo (Eastern China) hoping that the new agreements could increase the value of Hungary's annual food exports to China to \$100 million. In parallel, it was expected that China would lift its embargo on the import of Hungarian duck and goose meat, which was imposed last year because of the HPAI outbreak. It could have also helped to conclude talks on Hungarian turkey and chicken exports to China, however, this outbreak of HPAI will be taken into consideration before easing any restrictions on food imports from Hungary.